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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1383
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP 1330
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1456
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY 0216
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0287

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SIPDIS

EUR/WE FOR ALEXANDRA MCKNIGHT
WHA FOR JUAN GONZALEZ
WHA/CCA FOR RICARDO ZUNIGA
WHA/CEN FOR CHRIS WEBSTER
WHA/AND FOR TABATHA FAIRCLOUGH
USEU FOR BOB BLACKSTONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN LAUDS U.S. APPROACH, URGES EVEN GREATER
PRESSURE ON HONDURAS

REF: A. STATE 92655
[1](#)B. STATE 90808
[1](#)C. STATE 83014
[1](#)D. STATE 82937

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Arnold A. Chacon, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: During a on-on-one lunch September 10 with Spanish Secretary of State for IberoAmerican Affairs Juan Pablo de Laiglesia, the Charge d'Affaires engaged in a frank discussion with de Laiglesia on shared concerns in the Western Hemisphere, particularly Honduras. On the eve of visits to Madrid by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (September 11) and Bolivian President Evo Morales (September 14-15), the Charge conveyed U.S. concerns about Spain's seemingly inconsistent policy toward certain Latin American countries and underscored key messages. The meeting also served to preview short-term areas of cooperation in anticipation of the arrival of a new U.S. ambassador, with whom de Laiglesia looked forward to engaging, and upcoming high-level visits by other U.S. officials as well as to discuss Spain's priorities for the region during its 2010 EU Presidency. De Laiglesia will be in New York from September 19-26 and expressed interest in continuing consultations on the margins of the UN General Assembly in the context of the Latin America Working Group. END SUMMARY.

//HONDURAS//

[1](#)2. (C) De Laiglesia was pleased with his July 18 meeting with WHA Assistant Secretary Tom Shannon and lauded the Secretary's forward-leaning approach on Honduras. He perceived deposed President Zelaya's willingness to sign the San Jose accords in Tegucigalpa and without conditions -- pointing to Zelaya's much-touted September 7 letter to Secretary Clinton -- as a key signal. He urged the United States to do even more to block aid and withhold recognition of upcoming elections. He suggested that only the United States was in a position to exert the requisite pressure on the de facto regime, and held that a USG diplomatic success would essentially pull the rug out from under Chavez and Bolivarianism in the hemisphere.

[1](#)3. (C) De Laiglesia summarized Spain's views of the situation

as very much in line with ours: Micheletti must go, and under no circumstances should he be allowed to place the sash of power on the new president next January. De Laiglesia said that while Spain was not in a position to signal that future elections would be free and fair, and the GOS was tempted to state outright that Spain would not recognize elections, he also wanted to be pragmatic. In the event that Zelaya was not returned to power, and the international community were able to determine that free and fair elections had taken place in Honduras, De Laiglesia envisioned a transfer of power in which three former presidents could symbolically place the sash on the newly elected leader. He lamented that OAS Secretary General Insulza, Costa Rican President Arias, and others had stopped trying and as a result, Honduras was not feeling sufficient pressure.

14. (C) Urged by the Charge to announce Spanish intentions about Honduran officials' visas sooner rather than later, de Laiglesia shared Spanish frustration with the European Union over a common visa policy. He said it would be nearly impossible to get EU consensus in the short term, and calculated in the best case a five-week timeline to reach a common position, the impact of which would be felt too late to make a real difference. He noted that the conclusions of the September 14-15 GAERC meeting, at which EU foreign ministers would hear analyses on a variety of Latin American issues, would be key to concerted action. At that meeting Spain planned to promote targeted sanctions and push to have a Zelaya representative included in EU association talks with Central America, to bring more pressure on the de facto regime. Depending on how other states responded, Spain would

have to decide whether to go it alone on Honduras visa measures and other actions.

//CUBA//

15. (C) De Laiglesia praised President Obama's overtures toward Cuba, agreeing they constituted an enlightened change of policy, and took on board the Charge's call to maintain pressure on the Cuban government over human rights issues. De Laiglesia parroted the importance of demonstrating positive results and said Spain hoped to continue working with the United States to achieve democratic reforms. Regarding the planned October travel of Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) spokeswoman Elena Valenciano to Cuba and the Charge's suggestion that she meet with Cuban dissidents, de Laiglesia stressed that Valenciano was traveling in a political capacity and representing the Socialist Party, not/not the GOS.

//COLOMBIA//

16. (C) De Laiglesia differed with the Charge's upbeat assessment of developments in Colombia. His dismissal ("not a shining success") was disappointing but may have betrayed an outdated understanding of Colombia based on his earlier experiences there in the 1970s. When he referred to Colombia's incursion into Ecuador last year, the Charge countered that Colombia had a legitimate right to defend itself. De Laiglesia was defensive about FM Moratinos's August public comments regarding the U.S.-Colombia defense cooperation agreement (Moratinos's comments were later publicly corrected by Spanish First Vice President Fernandez de la Vega). He welcomed the Secretary's letter (ref B) but assured the Charge several times that Spain was merely relaying Venezuelan and Ecuadorian regional concerns and not second-guessing USG policy or demanding explanations.

//VENEZUELA//

17. (C) In anticipation of Chavez's arrival in Madrid the night of September 10, the Charge cautioned de Laiglesia against providing Chavez with a stage and said it was important that Spain make clear its concerns about Chavez's undemocratic efforts to centralize power and his harassment of NGOs and broadcast media. The Charge encouraged de

Laiglesia to use Spain's 2010 EU presidency to raise further awareness of Venezuela's weapons proliferation in South America and the potential for diversion of arms to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (ref C). De Laiglesia assured the Charge that Spain had and would continue to deliver hard messages behind closed doors during both the Venezuelan and Bolivian presidents' visits. De Laiglesia reiterated that Spain shared U.S. concerns but would convey them "in our own quiet way."

18. (SBU) Chavez met briefly September 11 with both King Juan Carlos I and President Zapatero, but the GOS steered clear of joint media events, opting instead for a released statement. Chavez nonetheless made seemingly conflicting statements to the media during his 24-hour stay -- first saying he had come to Spain to consolidate bilateral relations and later suggesting that Venezuela and its neighbors need not rely on Spain as a gateway to Europe. "We do not need those doors. We should not keep repeating colonialist cliches. We are at the same level," Chavez told the Spanish media. Chavez urged Colombians to reject the U.S. presence on Colombian bases. Chavez also played up Spanish Repsol's major discovery of natural gas off the coast of Venezuela. The find, which has yet to be confirmed, is estimated at 7 to 8 trillion cubic feet and could convert Venezuela into the fourth of fifth largest supplier in the world. Repsol's President Antonio Brufau prominently accompanied Chavez throughout his stay.

19. (C) COMMENT: Spain is looking for success stories to tout during its EU presidency. To the extent that Latin America will be a Spanish priority, and looking especially to the

EU-Latin America Summit Spain will host in 2010, de Laiglesia heard our warnings about not conveying mixed messages to the region. De Laiglesia knows Latin America well but told the Charge he was just getting back into the region after many years away. Immediately prior to assuming his present post as WHA Assistant Secretary-equivalent, de Laiglesia had served as Special Ambassador for Humanitarian and Social Affairs and previously headed the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development. A knowledgeable, serious, career diplomat, de Laiglesia tends to toe the MFA line more than his political appointee predecessor, as evidenced by his defense of Foreign Minister Moratinos on Colombia. De Laiglesia agreed to use the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States as another vehicle for fluid and timely communication with the USG on pressing regional issues, and looks forward to engaging with Ambassador-designate Solomont and other USG officials on Latin America.

CHACON